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6 September 1966



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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Approved For Release 2003/05/16 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009200040001-5

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: With the constituent assembly election only five days off, the Saigon government is intensifying its efforts to influence the voting.

In an attempt to strengthen their position with the voters, Saigon leaders are considering the release of some Buddhist and Catholic political prisoners. Premier Ky at last report was opposed to such a move. However, Chief of State Thieu and Tran Van An, a prominent civilian member of the ruling Directorate, are said to have discussed freeing about 50 detainees before the election for obvious political reasons.

The government remains concerned about the effects Thich Tri Quang's death would have on Buddhist voters. The monk was still "quite strong" on 2 September and was sustaining himself on sugared liquid and dextrose. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Quang probably will not die in the near future from physical dissipation associated with his fast. [REDACTED] Quang has a strong enough will to end his life if he decided to do so.

The government continues its efforts to tighten physical security for voters. It issued a strongly worded decree on 29 August stipulating prison terms at hard labor for persons interfering with citizens' right to vote. According to a US Embassy assessment of Communist antielection activities, several polling places have already been bombed and hundreds of incidents of terror have taken place in the past few weeks.

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Military Situation in South Vietnam: A Viet Cong mortar attack on the 1st Air Cavalry Division base at Camp Radcliffe near An Khe in the central highlands killed four US soldiers and wounded 61. Of 77 helicopters hit, five were totally destroyed and 61 were damaged. Some 43 of the damaged aircraft will require a week or more of repair. (See Map)

Communist Economic Developments: North Vietnam has concluded new economic aid pacts with Communist China and North Korea. The pacts were signed in Pyongyang by the North Vietnamese mission led by politburo member Le Thanh Nghi. The mission left for Moscow on 4 September and will visit other Eastern European capitals, according to Moscow radio.

The Chinese and Koreans, recognizing that Hanoi will be unable to finance its growing needs for economic and military aid, agreed to put their assistance on a grant basis.

The composition of aid to North Vietnam will also probably change in the coming year. Agreements in 1965 reflected stepped-up assistance for Hanoi's economic development plan, but that program is being deemphasized as Hanoi devotes increasing amounts of its resources to reconstruction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of essential economic output and services.

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Communist China : Press coverage of Red Guard activity indicates a growing army role in the organization and the emergence of Lin Piao as Guard leader.

News stories, as yet unconfirmed by official Chinese broadcasts, report that Lin is "commander in chief" of the Guards. Marshal Ho Lung is identified as the "chief of staff," and Chou En-lai as the "adviser" of the organization.

The Guards are being shaken down into a regular organization under tighter control. Although violent and often absurd Guard activity is still reported, the youths are under increased pressure to take a more moderate line.

A People's Daily editorial on 4 September urged the Guards to avoid coercion and instead rely on "reason" even in dealing with class enemies. The editorial attributes this instruction--put forward on 31 August by Lin Piao--to Mao Tse-tung himself.

Lin Piao continues to receive propaganda attention second only to Mao. On 3 September the Chinese republished his article on "People's War" first issued a year ago. The army is said to have been studying Lin's "thought" for the past year.

An article in Liberation Army Journal, broadcast on 4 September, reported the views of an army division commander inspired by Mao's ideas and Lin Piao's article. This article stressed the long-range character of the struggle against the US and the importance of the role to be played by the "people" elsewhere in the world.

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Indonesia-USSR: Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik will not visit the Soviet Union as he had planned this month.

Malik had hoped to discuss rescheduling Indonesia's debt, the status of present Soviet economic projects, and new credits. Moscow refused his request to visit on the grounds that Soviet leaders were proceeding with "long-standing arrangements"--presumably vacation and travel plans--during the time Malik wished to be in the USSR.

Since he will not be visiting Moscow, Malik has also canceled plans to visit Poland and Czechoslovakia. Malik himself repeatedly postponed visiting the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe because of Indonesian domestic developments.

The Soviet Union is Indonesia's largest single creditor. In July, Soviet technical representatives told the Indonesians that the USSR might reschedule payments on delivered military equipment, which constitutes the bulk of Indonesia's debt, but would find it "difficult" to postpone payments on economic debts. A meeting of Indonesia's Western creditors is scheduled to be held in Tokyo on 19 and 20 September.

Indonesian economists state that they cannot make definitive plans for critically needed domestic stabilization until new payment schedules are arranged on the country's massive foreign debt. [REDACTED]

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Congo (Kinshasa) - Belgium: President Mobutu plans to send Foreign Minister Bomboko to Brussels this week to seek a rapprochement.

Bomboko will attempt to see Belgian Foreign Minister Harmel informally as a prelude to further discussion. It is not clear just which issues the Congolese will be willing to discuss, but this is the first indication since June they might be ready to negotiate on the disputes which have been plaguing Congolese-Belgian relations.

The touchiest issues at the moment are the level of Belgian assistance, a tangle of complex economic problems, and the appointment of a new ranking Congolese representative in Brussels who, the Belgians believe, was responsible for past brutal treatment of Belgians in the Congo.

Late last week, Brussels itself decided to pursue a conciliatory policy if the Congolese made this course possible. The Congolese tendency to take drastic unilateral action may complicate the situation again, however.

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NOTES

Iraq: Rumors of an imminent cabinet reshuffle are proliferating in Baghdad. Prime Minister Naji Talib has said that he wants to form a national coalition government including both Baathists and Nasirists. The inclusion of these competing elements, however, would almost certainly produce still another basically unstable arrangement.

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USSR-US: Fedorenko, the chief Soviet UN delegate, has told Ambassador Goldberg the USSR wants to resume bilateral talks with the US on outer space. Fedorenko said the talks could take place as soon as Ambassador Morozov, who normally handles this subject, returns to New York and prior to the UN outer space legal subcommittee session on 12 September. Soviet willingness to hold early bilateral talks suggests that Soviet leaders wish to reach agreement on the peaceful uses of outer space during the upcoming UN General Assembly.

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